

DOCKET NO.: BELL-0163 / 01330
Application No.: 10/034,654
Office Action Dated: October 21, 2003

PATENT
REPLY FILED UNDER EXPEDITED
PROCEDURE PURSUANT TO
37 CFR § 1.116

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In response to the Office Action dated October 21, 2003, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration based on the following remarks. Applicants respectfully submit that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-41 are pending in this application. Claims 1-5, 7, 8, 10-17, 19, 20, 22-28, 30, 31, 33-36, 39, and 41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,160,989 ("Hendricks"). Claims 6, 18, 29, 37, and 38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Hendricks in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,630,204 ("Hylton"). Claims 9, 21, 32 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Hendricks in view of U.S. Patent Application No. US2002/0083441 ("Flickinger").

Interview Summary

Applicants' attorneys and the Examiner discussed the claims of the present application in relation to Hendricks in a telephonic interview on November 18, 2003. Applicants argued that Woods does not teach or suggest "inserting at the viewer device into the broadcast content advertising content corresponding to the characteristics of the viewer", as recited in independent claims of the present invention. No agreement was reached.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-5, 7, 8, 10-17, 19, 20, 22-28, 30, 31, 33-36, 39, and 41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being unpatentable over Hendricks. Applicants respectfully disagree.

The Claimed Invention

The present application discloses systems and methods for inserting advertising content into broadcast content. More specifically there is disclosed:

"A viewer device such as, for example, a set top box (STB) located at a home or viewer location gathers data identifying the characteristics of a viewer such as, for example, the viewer's age, gender, marital status, geographic

location, and viewing habits. The viewer characteristic data is used to identify advertising content corresponding to the characteristics of a viewer. . . Upon receiving the advertising content, the viewer device selects advertisements matching the viewers characteristics and inserts the selected advertisements into the broadcast programming. Thereafter, the viewer device transmits the broadcast content and inserted advertising content to a television for viewing at the home or viewer location.” (Application, Summary of the invention).

In accordance with the disclosure, claim 13 is directed to a “method for inserting advertising content in broadcast programming.” The claimed method comprises the following steps:

“gathering at a viewer device data identifying characteristics of a viewer;
receiving at the viewer device advertising content;
identifying at the viewer device advertising content corresponding to the characteristics of the viewer;
receiving at the viewer device broadcast content;
inserting at the viewer device into the broadcast content advertising content corresponding to the characteristics of the viewer.”

In order for a reference to anticipate this claim, the reference must teach the combination of all of the claimed elements, including those emphasized. Applicants’ undersigned attorney respectfully submits that the cited reference does not.

Claims 1 and 25 similarly require, “inserting at the viewer device into the broadcast content advertising content corresponding to the characteristics of the viewer.” Thus, for a reference to anticipate claims 1 and 25, the reference must teach “inserting at the viewer device into the broadcast content advertising content corresponding to the characteristics of the viewer.” Applicants’ undersigned attorney respectfully submits that the cited reference does not.

Claim 36 requires, in pertinent part, “transmitting broadcast content to the viewer, said broadcast content having signals therein identifying intervals into which advertising content corresponding to the characteristics of the viewer can be inserted.” Thus, for a

reference to anticipate claim 36, the reference must teach “transmitting broadcast content to the viewer, said broadcast content having signals therein identifying intervals into which advertising content corresponding to the characteristics of the viewer can be inserted.” Applicants’ undersigned attorney respectfully submits that the cited reference does not.

The Cited Reference Does Not Teach the Claimed Invention

Hendricks discloses a network controller (Fig. 2, element 214) inside a cable headend (Fig. 2, element 208). The network controller:

“modifies a program control information signal at the cable headend before the modified signal is transmitted to each STB. This signal is used with polling methods to receive upstream data from the STB’s. The invention initiates such upstream data retrieval, gathers all data received, and compiles viewer demographics information and programs watched information. The invention processes this data and information to generate packages of advertisements targeted towards each STB.” (Hendricks, Abstract of the Invention).

Thus, Hendricks teaches a system wherein advertising is identified and inserted at the headend.

Importantly, and in contrast to the present invention, Hendricks does not teach, “inserting at the viewer device into the broadcast content advertising content corresponding to the characteristics of the viewer”, as recited in independent claims 1, 13, and 25 of the present application. Furthermore, Hendricks does not teach, “identifying at the viewer device advertising content corresponding to the characteristics of the viewer” as recited in independent claim 13 of the present application. Additionally, Hendricks does not teach, “transmitting broadcast content to the viewer, said broadcast content having signals therein identifying intervals into which advertising content corresponding to the characteristics of the viewer can be inserted”, as recited in independent claim 36 of the present application. Indeed, to the contrary, Hendricks teaches, “modifying a program signal received from the program delivery system’s operations center before the program signal is transmitted to the

set top terminal (Hendricks, col. 4, lines 18-21). Thus, not only does Hendricks not teach the claimed elements, it actually teaches away from the claimed combinations.

In the Office Action dated October 21, 2003, the Examiner asserts that Hendricks allegedly discloses a set top box that builds a personal profile consisting of demographic information. This profile is allegedly used to provide targeted advertising content that can be inserted into broadcast programming and provided to the viewer (See Office Action, page 2, last paragraph). Even if these assertions are correct, Hendricks still does not teach or suggest inserting advertising content into broadcast content at a viewer device. Based on these assertions, Hendricks merely discloses that a personal profile may be gathered at a viewer device and then sent to the cable headend. The cable headend then identifies targeted advertising using the personal profile and inserts such targeted advertising into the broadcast stream. The cable headend then sends a combined stream of broadcast content and inserted targeted advertising back to the set top box.

Specifically, Hendricks discloses:

“Advertisement Targeting Routine 374 (shown in Fig. 13) is the software that generates packages of television commercials and advertisements geared towards particular viewers and makes use of a viewer’s demographic information and . . . outputs packages of advertisement geared towards each viewer (Col. 32, lines 4-11).”

Hendricks further discloses that, “Fig. 13 (including Advertisement Targeting Routine 374) shows the major software routines initiated and executed by the network controller (Col. 31, lines 44-45).” Thus, advertisement targeting is performed by the network controller inside the cable headend – not by the viewer device.

Furthermore, Hendricks specifically states:

“The local insertion component 246 of the signal processor 209 allows the control CPU to execute the instructions received from the network controller and insert any local programming and advertisements. Once such regional programming and advertisements have been inserted, the local insertion component passes the various signals to [a series of devices] that disseminates the composite video and audio signals to the set top box (Col. 21, lines 51-60).”

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As clearly shown in Fig. 6a, the local insertion component 246 is located at the cable headend and inserts advertising content at the headend. A combined stream of advertising content and broadcast content is then sent back to the set top box.

Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claims 2-5, 7, 8, 10-12, 14-17, 19, 20, 22-24, 26-28, 30, 31, 33-35, 39, and 41 are patentable at least by reason of their dependency. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejections are respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Dependent claims 6, 18, 29, 37, and 38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Hendricks in view of Hylton. Dependent claims 9, 21, 32 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Hendricks in view of Flickinger. Applicants respectfully disagree and submit that such dependent claims are patentable at least by reason of their dependency. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) rejections are respectfully requested.

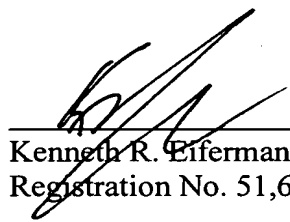
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CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application and an early Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested.

Date: January 26, 2004


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